

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	OIGO-00
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	NSCE-00	PER-00	GIWI-00	SSO-00	SS-00	FMP-00	SCRS-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1968
INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BUJUMBURA 000059

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TAGS: MARR BY SO AU
SUBJECT: AMISOM: BURUNDIAN CONCERNS

REF: DAO IIRS 6916004010 AND 6916004210

¶1. This is an action message. Action request at para 7.

¶2. In the past week, the First and Second Vice Presidents and the Minister of Defense have raised with the Ambassador the subject of protection and "equitable" remuneration for the Burundian contingent in AMISOM. In the wake of another Burundian troop casualty in Somalia last week (for a total of 25 Burundian peacekeepers killed in Somalia to date), they urged the USG to provide additional protective equipment and to weigh in with the African Union to, first, pay the six-month salary arrears to the AMISOM (both Burundian and Ugandan) troops and, second, to increase the remuneration of all AMISOM troops to equal the salaries being paid to Burundian (and other) forces conducting UN PKO missions in Darfur and elsewhere in Africa. Ambassador was told that at a recent meeting of senior African military officers in Kampala, it was apparent that all considered service in Somali to be "extremely dangerous" and that other African nations would contribute troops to AMISOM only if the mission were either taken over the UN or the AU agreed to pay the equivalent of UN PKO mission salaries.

¶3. According to all three Burundian interlocutors, Burundian troops serving in Somalia are well-aware of -- and unhappy with -- the discrepancy in their salaries between what the African Union is paying them for AMISOM (\$750/month) and what the UN is paying their colleagues in Darfur and other UN PKO missions (\$1,028). This unhappiness recently surfaced in the form of a show of "discontent" within the army (reftel). According to the minister of defense, MOD responded by sharing with the soldiers a copy of the MOU with the AU (which outlines the pay scheme) and by court-martialing and dismissing those (few) who chose to manifest their discontent appropriately (i.e., by going public).

¶4. Despite promises and previous reports from the AU, the MOD told us today that the Central Bank of Burundi has not -- as of today -- received a money transfer from the AU to settle the troop salary arrears. On the other hand, the Burundians claim that the AU has already transferred funds to Uganda and that the Ugandan troops have been paid. (Note: Each Burundian soldier with AMISOM should be banking \$650/month. The AU pays \$750/month and the Government of Burundi deducts \$100 (in tax). The AU transfers funds to the Central Bank of Burundi which then deposits \$650/month/soldier into individual accounts specifically established for the peacekeepers and which families can draw on. End Comment.)

¶5. With regard to protective equipment, we have reminded the Burundians that the USG has provided each Burundian AMISOM peacekeeper with armored vests and basic kit (helmets, boots, uniform, belt). But what is perhaps more welcome to the Burundians is news that the USG will provide twelve (12) CASSPIRs (a landmine-protected armored personnel carrier) -- 10 to Somalia and two to Bujumbura for training purposes -- for Burundian troops in Somalia. These will be delivered to the Burundians in April, 2010. The USG is also providing, under a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of State and the Burundi MOD, Counter IED and Force Protection

training and assistance. The award is for 12 months, beginning January, 2010, and extendible for an additional year.

¶6. Comment: The issue of the remuneration and the safety of the Burundian AMISOM troops is apparently beginning to attract more (and not all positive) attention at home -- to wit the recent show of discontent in the army which was "picked up" by the media and a few of the political parties. Given the national elections this year, the government/ruling party is going to be sensitive to its image and to the need to protect and reward its troops in Somalia. Too, the reformed and integrated (but still fragile) Burundian military is concerned that such internal, morale issues be averted so that they do not become politicized by the political parties. End Comment.

¶7. Action Request: Please advise how Ambassador should respond to the request that USG weigh in with the AU to ensure full payment of arrears and increase in base salary for AMISOM troops.

Slutz